

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

24 July 1984

LAW ENFORCEMENT NEWS CONFERENCE

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LOS ANGELES

A top FBI agent, meeting the media with local law enforcement chiefs in a show of pre-Olympic unity, said Tuesday that worldwide intelligence sources have not developed any information that terrorists have targeted the Games.

Richard Bretzing, special agent in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles office, told a news conference the potential for a terrorist act "appears to be waning as the Games approach."

"We have an extensive intelligence gathering effort underway right now in cooperation with the world intelligence community and we are unaware through all of these efforts of any specific terrorist act that is being planned and directed at the Olympics," Bretzing said.

Bretzing was joined by Police Chief Daryl Gates, Sheriff Sherman Block and representatives of the White House, state and Los Angeles Olympic security planners. They reiterated that law enforcement is prepared to handle any incident that could develop during the Games, which open Saturday.

"We are all in charge," Gates replied, when asked who would be in command in the event of a major incident.

The officials met with reporters from throughout the world in the massive Olympic press center as thousands of police fanned out across Southern California Tuesday to provide security for the Games.

The security effort is the largest such operation undertaken in U.S. history involving local, state and federal authorities. It will employ horses, helicopters and even the Goodyear blimp to keep an eye on potential terrorists as well as the common pickpocket.

Gates said police are still waiting for an answer from the California governor's office on using the National Guard to provide security for "vital points."

The total security force includes the FBI, SWAT teams and thousands of khaki-clad security workers wearing smart blue berets, unarmed guards who serve as the "eyes and ears" of police.

The other "eyes" will be provided by two blimps that will give the Police Department an airborne observation platform. The blimps will also wink anti-crime advice to spectators on the ground.

The Goodyear blimp will be joined by a less-famous airship piloted by Fuji film, in the first such mission ever, police spokesman Rod Bernsen said.

"The advantage is that the blimps are relatively slow flying, so officers trained to work from the air will have a great advantage in surveying the areas around the Olympic venues and villages."

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'It's a tremendous aerial platform at 1,000 feet,' said Officer Mitchell Robins. 'We will be able to monitor the marathon, the opening and closing ceremonies and any major demonstrations.'

'The citizens of Los Angeles would rather see a blimp hovering over than a helicopter. It's less offensive and less noisy.'

Police officials advise, however, that tourists should take steps to protect themselves.

'Common sense is the key,' Police Lt. Dan Cooke said. 'If you haven't got it, borrow it.'

'Crime prevention kits' that emphasize how to protect valuables in a half dozen different languages have been distributed in hotels, travel agencies and on airlines, Cooke said.

Police Cmdr. William Booth said the Police Department actually expects decreased crime during the Games.

'That's been the experience in other major cities during the Olympics,' Booth said. 'Montreal experienced a decrease of some 20 percent.'

More than 12,000 police officers, sheriff's deputies and private security officers will be on the street during the Games July 28-Aug. 12, not counting the thousands on duty in neighboring cities.

There will be a \$55 million federal security force assembled with agents from the FBI, CIA, National Security Agency and others.

A task force of 30 officers on horseback has been deployed to maintain a visible police presence downtown, particularly in the tourist havens of Little Tokyo and Chinatown, and the Skid Row area.

The cost of providing security to prevent terrorism is expected to exceed \$100 million -- the largest single item in an Olympian budget of \$500 million.

Tourists are still the most likely crime victims, however, said police Lt. Gregory Berg.

A team of police pickpocket experts hit the streets the week before the Games to neutralize hundreds of such thieves believed to be in the area. Vice investigators shut down a credit card service that allegedly laundered money for outcall prostitution rings.